



**Self Help  
AFRICA**

2024

# HUMANITARIAN CAPACITY STATEMENT

Nairobi, Kenya, May 2018: Child and his mother preparing fish.



[selfhelpafrica.org](http://selfhelpafrica.org)

# About Self Help Africa

Self Help Africa (SHA) is an international development organisation dedicated to the vision of 'Sustainable livelihoods and healthy lives for all in a changing climate'. We have almost 50 years of experience working with smallholder farmers and their communities, focusing mostly on Sub-Saharan Africa but recently expanding beyond Africa to Bangladesh and Brazil.

SHA is currently implementing a portfolio of approximately 80 projects in 14 countries. We are funded by a variety of institutional and private donors including the European Union, Irish Aid, FCDO, UN organisations (such as WFP and FAO), and many other institutional and corporate donors.

SHA is part of the Gorta Group, a collective of organisations comprising Self Help Africa, United Purpose, Partner Africa, TruTrade, and CUMO microfinance. The Group provides a holistic approach to value chain development, supporting an end-to-end, farm to fork approach within the agricultural sector in Africa.

## OUR VISION

Sustainable livelihoods and healthy lives for all in a changing climate.

## OUR MISSION

We aim to alleviate hunger, poverty, social inequality and the impact of climate change through community-led, market-based and enterprise-focused approaches, so that people have access to nutritious food, clean water, decent employment and incomes, while sustaining natural resources.

## OUR VALUES

### IMPACT

We are accountable, ambitious & committed to systemic change.

### INNOVATION

We are agile, creative and enterprising in an ever changing world.

### COMMUNITY

We are inclusive, honest and have integrity in our relationships.



# Our Approach to Humanitarian Response

## TARGETING HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTIONS FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT

We focus our humanitarian response capacity on situations where SHA is best placed to deliver a response and where our specific expertise can make a real difference. SHA will respond to crises linked to the changing climate and extreme weather events, natural disasters, conflicts, crop and livestock disease outbreaks and displacement. **We respond to crises in our existing countries of operation** where we have the capacity, networks and relevant infrastructure. SHA will respond to crises **where our specific sectoral expertise provides a clear added value.**

## PREPARING FOR HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTIONS

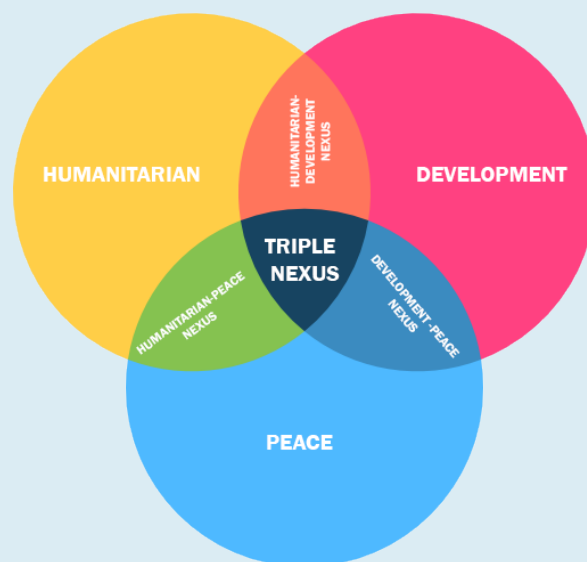
Our country offices participate in relevant cluster coordination groups and have strong relationships with local, district and national government ministries and communities. Country offices carry out rapid situational analysis at the start of a crisis, including a market analysis and an assessment of humanitarian needs. The country management team will also assess any additional capacity requirements with partners in the affected area. In addition, security will be evaluated to ensure we can safely access the communities in need.

At regional level, our Global Advisors monitor forecasts and warnings (ENSO El Nino/La Nina, Indian Ocean Dipole, Cyclones, etc) and the risks of floods and droughts, soil water moisture, and the risk of pest and disease outbreaks in crops, livestock, and humans. The Advisors track pest and disease outbreaks, the costs of agricultural inputs; food prices; nutrition and health status to provide early warnings of potential crisis to field staff and donors.

**We believe that the provision of any humanitarian assistance and protection should be combined with longer-term strategies to achieve sustainable development goals.** When deciding to respond to an emergency, we consider the impact on existing programmes and partners. Country offices communicate their analysis to Senior Management (Regional Directors, Programmes Director & Humanitarian Director). Once a decision has been made, country teams will seek approval from existing donors for use of crisis modifiers and budget amendments to facilitate immediate additional funds. If required, these will also be sourced through SHA's internal humanitarian fund and possibly the launch of public appeals in Ireland and the UK.

## CORE ELEMENTS OF HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMME DELIVERY

SHA designs and implements its programmes using the principles of the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus and has a policy dedicated to this matter. SHA is committed to a holistic approach to reducing vulnerabilities to achieve resilience in increasingly complex circumstances, defined by growing conflicts and climate change. **We believe humanitarian aid; development programmes and peacebuilding are not linear processes and that they are all necessary at the same time.** Our approach to the humanitarian, development, peace nexus therefore focuses on delivering context specific and conflict sensitive support to respond to the spectrum of humanitarian, peace, and development needs in communities. As a development/humanitarian organisation, SHA looks at the HDP nexus through a strong resilience lens.





**Building community resilience is core to our development and chronic crisis programmes,** which support longer term efforts by communities and local governments in strengthening disaster preparedness and response mechanisms, build safety nets, increase access to financial services, and ensure that markets systems can respond to fluctuations in demand and market actors are included in humanitarian cash and market-based responses.

We train and equip village and district disaster risk reduction and management committees; provide farmers with long-term forecasts and partner with telecommunications companies to disseminate information on weather and pest outbreak; provide farmers with fast growing seeds and ensure that water supply and sanitation systems are robust enough to cope with shocks.



Distributing basic staple foods, Southern Province, Zambia

**We work through local partners** where possible and appropriate, committed to promoting and embedding localisation principles in our delivery approaches. SHA's partnerships with **the private sector and government institutions** enable us to respond rapidly, such as partnering with mobile phone companies and micro finance institutions to carry out cash disbursement in crisis situations. Our network of research and commercial partners can also be activated providing innovative responses to acute crisis: e.g. AI and remote sensing to detect crop pests and map crises affected areas, drones for the precision application of insecticides and crowd sourcing information from hard to reach areas.

**We take steps to ensure that all our interventions are sustainable.** In protracted crises we aim to design and undertake longer-term humanitarian action. At the outset of all humanitarian projects and programmes we design a 'phase-out' strategy which seeks to define how SHA and its partners will wind down relief activities.

We are committed to incorporating gender analysis into all stages of the humanitarian project cycle, and to developing projects and programmes that are responsive to the differentiated needs and vulnerability factors of women and men and **we carry out intersectional analysis** recognising that vulnerable groups may be differentiated by age, cultural – and religious expression, ethnicity, social and economic status, sexual identity, and disability. We recognise that humanitarian crises can present opportunities to promote women's strategic interests and we seek to identify these whilst endeavouring to ensure that humanitarian assistance and protection reduce specific vulnerabilities experienced by women.

When implementing humanitarian programmes **in situations of conflict, SHA also promotes and implements the 'Do no harm' framework.** Duty of care for our staff is of prime importance, and it is also part of our mandate to build capacity among partners in developing their security plans.

Key learning points include **the importance of market-based responses** where possible. Where markets are functioning, SHA prefers to use cash transfers and e-voucher systems to provide food and agricultural inputs to disaster-affected communities, protect the local economy and provide the recipients with choice. Where there are market failures, SHA prioritises the procurement of food and seeds from the agricultural cooperatives and farmer-owned seed enterprises that SHA supports in its long-term development programs, and advocates for other NGOs, UN agencies and donors to do likewise, in order to integrate long term enterprise development projects into humanitarian responses and build the capacity of local institutions to respond to crisis.

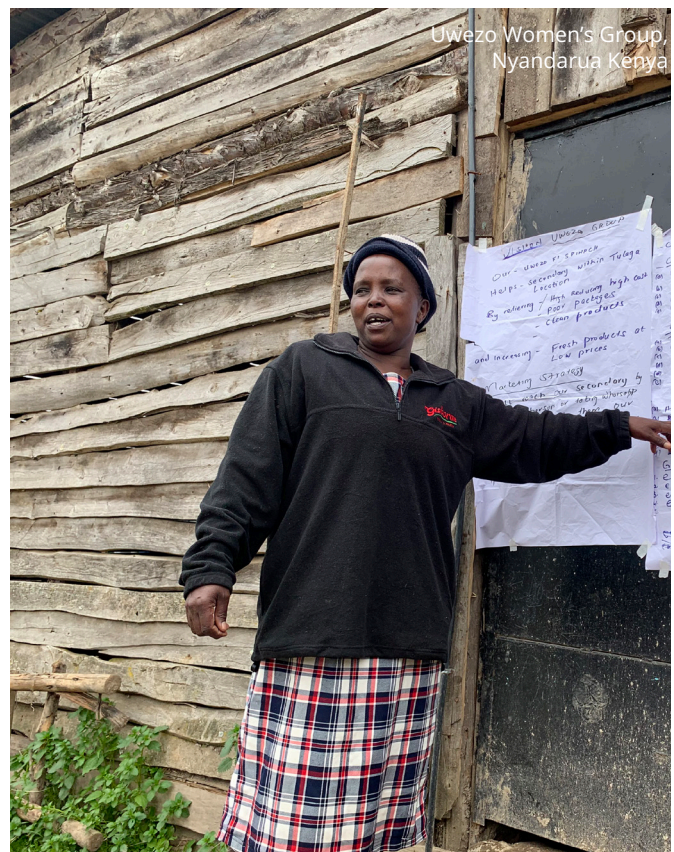




Multi-use cash distributions to IDPs in Debre Birhan, Amhara

## Humanitarian Response Experience

- Our acute humanitarian responses enabled us to provide **emergency food, non-food items (including shelter kits, blankets, food, buckets, mosquito nets and tarpaulin) and cash to 16,733 people** in 2020 and to **543,175 people** with emergency relief and/or contingency planning for disasters in 2021.
- In 2023/2024 SHA Ethiopia is assisting nearly **60,000 IDPs in Amhara region** with multi-purpose cash, WASH and Health interventions.
- In 2024 in Zambia, SHA will be targeting **15,000 people in drought affected regions** with food, multi-purpose cash, and irrigation kits.
- Over the last 4 years in **Malawi SHA has responded to Cyclone IDAI, Cyclone Ana, COVID-19, Cholera** reaching a combined **3 million people**.
- In 2024 in Malawi SHA, as lead of the NGO humanitarian consortium, will be targeting communities across all districts in Malawi in response to the drought with **multi-purpose cash and WASH/health interventions**.



Uwezo Women's Group, Nyandarua Kenya

## Examples of recent responses to acute crises include (in chronological order):

Year	Country	Description
2024	Malawi	Emergency response following El Nino related drought leveraging funding from both Irish Aid and GIZ, which includes food and cash distributions as well as irrigation support. SHA is a co-chair of the Malawi NGO Humanitarian Committee and led on the coordination of this response.
2024	Zambia	Emergency response following El Nino related drought leveraging funding from both Irish Aid and WFP, which includes food and cash distributions as well as irrigation support.
2024-2028	Malawi	SHA is part of UNICEF's 5-year Contingency Humanitarian program document for Malawi, through which funding is prepositioned and ready for activation in the event that of any disasters (floods, dry spells, landslides or cholera) during the specified period in the districts of Thyolo, Ntcheu, Dedza, Chikwawa and Nsanje.
2023-2024	Ethiopia	Funding from OCHA has been pre-positioned to reach vulnerable populations affected by the humanitarian crisis in East Gojam Zone, Amhara region, with Rapid Emergency WASH, Health and Multi-Purpose Cash activities.
2022	Malawi	Emergency response to cyclones Ana and Gombe in Thyolo District, supporting 260,430 people funded by The One Foundation.
2022	Malawi	Emergency WASH preparedness and response to contain and control the WASH related diseases and COVID-19 outbreak in 17 Health Care Facilities, schools and surrounding communities in 4 districts (Blantyre, Lilongwe, Chitipa and Karonga) funded by UNICEF.
2022	Malawi	Emergency WASH response and resilience building for 150,000 persons in 5 cholera hit districts (Rumphu, Nkhatabay, Mzimba, Nsanje and Chikwawa) funded by UNICEF.
2021	Ethiopia	In response to the war in Tigray SHA worked through ADCS, the Development Branch of the Ethiopian Catholic Diocese in Adigrat, Tigray to provide cash transfers to 800 households to purchase essential foods and medicine.
2021	Ethiopia	SHA provided 8,485 people impacted by Desert Locusts in Oda Bultum with food, oil and seeds. The food items and seeds were sourced from cooperatives supported by SHA's long term seed system development programs. SHA also provided logistic and technical support to the Federal Government and FAO to conduct locust surveys.
2021	Kenya	Emergency support to local government desert locust control teams. At the request of Baringo County SHA provided ground spraying equipment and training to government staff and assisted the Country to set up teams of locust scouts. The scouts were provided with training and tablets to monitor locust swarms and provide real-time data to FAO and the GoK using the e-locust app.
2019-2023	Ethiopia	To address the food security crisis in Ethiopia 900+ households in North Shewa received cash transfers, including 30% IDPs, thanks to funding by Irish Aid, along with other agricultural inputs aimed at enhancing food safety (improved seeds, livestock, tools, etc.). 375 additional IDPs received cash transfers with funding from the Irish Emergency Alliance and fundraising appeals during 2023.
2019-2020	Zambia	South Appeal for Humanitarian Action in the Kafue Basin. In response to a severe drought, SHA delivered a two-pronged emergency response of maize meal distribution (25kg bags/month) and social cash transfers (K100/month) to 3,000 food insecure individuals.
2019	Malawi	As part of the Covid-19 response in Malawi, with funding from UK Aid and the Embassy of Ireland through UNICEF, we implemented an Emergency WASH Preparedness and Response project at Emergency Treatment Units (ETUs) in 11 districts ensuring that the ETUs and surrounding communities had adequate WASH services thus reaching to approximately 2,500,000 people. Furthermore, we supported those returning to Malawi from South Africa by ensuring access to WASH facilities at screening venues.



SHA has also been developing expertise in working remotely in areas that are too insecure for SHA staff to operate openly (i.e., in Burkina Faso). We will also use our learning from testing shock-sensitive social protection in Malawi where we co-led a trial on the use of a social protection registry for targeting the humanitarian response.

Apart from working in providing humanitarian response in those areas where we have a presence in the onset of sudden crises, Self Help Africa has also valuable experience working in protracted crises, such as a number of refugee and IDP hosting contexts, offering durable and sustainable solutions. Below are listed a few examples of our recent work:

Year	Country	Description
2024-2026	Burkina Faso	Through its partnership with Enabel, SHA is supporting the creation of sustainable livelihoods through training and the socio-professional integration of young people and women, including IDPs, in the North-Central Region.
2023-2027	Uganda	Sustainable Food for All (SUF4A) will be implemented in Magoro Sub-County, Katakwi District, in Eastern Uganda and in the refugee settlements and host-communities of Adjumani district, in Northern Uganda and reach 2,000 households. The overall goal is "Improved access to and consumption of sustainable, diverse and nutritious food among low-income farming households".
2023-2027	Burkina Faso	This multi-sectoral project aims at building the resilience of 1,265 vulnerable households (host community) against the adverse effects of climate change through the sustainable use and management of natural resources and the promotion of a green economy; as well as the resilience of 1,000 IDP households by supporting the reconstruction of viable and sustainable livelihoods.
2023-2024	Uganda	SHA work in partnership with FAO in Uganda aims at improving the food and nutrition security of refugee and host community households by delivering capacity building and business development services to households involved in green banana, sesame, jack fruits, cassava and sweet potatoes production in Kiryandongo.
2022-2024	Bangladesh	To address the economic and livelihood challenges for those living on Cox's Bazar, this project will strengthen the resilience and sustainable development of selected host communities and support the skills development and self-reliance of Rohingya refugees. Participants will be supported to find employment, trained in innovative livelihood practices including agroecology, animal husbandry, and risk reduction. Finally, they'll be supported with life skills. This action is funded by IOM.
2019-2023	Uganda	Refugees were also participants in the MORE-HONEY initiative funded by DANIDA, which aimed to develop an equitable honey value chain in East Acholi and Northern Karamoja regions to increase incomes for 2,000 smallholder farmers. The supported farmers received trainings on apiary management and business skills, and support to access affordable finance. The project also facilitated the creation of producer groups and honey business hubs/aggregation centres.
2017-2025	Uganda	SHA has been WFP's implementing partner for the delivery of its Agriculture and Market Support programme in West Nile and North Central Uganda, working to integrate refugees and host communities into profitable value chains. To date, 72.4% of smallholders adopted the business skills promoted, 68.2% increased the production of key income crops like maize, beans, groundnuts, sesame or soya bean, 96.5% accessed financial services through VSLAs, and at least 53% reported improvement in market access.
2017-2022	Uganda	In partnership with Irish Aid, SHA implemented MORE: Sustainable Livelihoods and Inclusive Markets for Refugees project in refugee and host communities in Adjumani. 40 farmers' groups were created, directly benefiting 1,000 people by supporting them to produce nutrient dense crops, promoting high value horticulture crop production and facilitating access to viable markets. Supported farmers reported a 69% increase in turnover thanks to market linkages supported by the project, with microfinance activities creating improved access to credit for 74% of participants.
2017-2019	Zambia	In partnership with UNHCR, SHA implemented 'Pathways to self-reliance for Refugees in Zambia: Graduation Pilot'.



Emergency Appeal – Kilifi Seed Distribution, Kenya

## Organisational Capacity for Humanitarian Response

We have a strong understanding of the humanitarian and development nexus and we are able to use our **knowledge of the local context**, of existing community and government support networks and of the local food market systems to ensure that emergency interventions do not damage existing systems or undermine development gains or longer-term recovery.

Our country teams have extensive **technical expertise** in the fields of agriculture, enterprise, food systems, nutrition, gender, community mobilisation and strengthening, water and sanitation, and cash/ voucher market-based programming. Our technical staff are supported by financial, logistics and procurement experts. The country teams are supported by a team of Global Technical Advisors with experience in humanitarian/emergency settings, regional directors, the Programmes Director and the Humanitarian Director. Our teams can pivot to provide a humanitarian response when required.

Our teams in Malawi, Zambia, Kenya, Gambia, and Ethiopia have staff with extensive **experience in humanitarian response** and our teams in Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Uganda, Burkina Faso and DRC have direct **experience working with IDPs, refugees and host communities**. SHA uses existing capacity rather than designated humanitarian staff to ensure that our crisis response is built into our programming, and that it becomes part of a longer-term response and support to the communities.

Our staff are trained in **international humanitarian principles and standards** including the Sphere Standards; the Core Humanitarian Standards; Safeguarding; Cash Programming (Kaya/CALP

online training); Emergency Seed System Security Assessments; the Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards. All staff have completed the UNDSS, 'Be Safe' online course, and many of those working in the higher risk rated countries have also attended Hostile Environment Awareness Training (HEAT). Our M&E database contains information on the GPS coordinates of the beneficiaries with whom we work (all protected as per GDPR laws) which can be used for rapid, targeted response.

SHA has a robust **Humanitarian Policy** which is based on best practise. This policy is organisation wide, but each country office is able to determine, in consultation with regional offices and head office, its response to specific humanitarian situations based on the local context and our role and programme in each country. We seek to adopt the Core Humanitarian Standard and to apply Sphere Minimum Standards and other relevant minimum standards in our humanitarian work. In applying quality and accountability standards, we seek to make a **'people-centred' approach** a reality, and to ensure that our interventions are acceptable and accountable to rights- holders above all, as well as donors and other actors. We are committed to training our staff and those of our partners in the rationale for and the application of quality and accountability standards.

Each country office has an updated **security plan** and these plans reflect requirements in humanitarian situations. Security conditions and security plans are reviewed at the outset of a new humanitarian crisis and on a 6 monthly basis. Any security incidents occurring are reported within a 24-hour period in line with organizational policy.





Delivering WASH supplies with support from UNICEF to Nyambadwe camp in Blantyre following Cyclone Freddie

## Partnerships

In all of our countries of operation, we work closely with **UN clusters** (e.g. Food Security Cluster, WASH cluster, Inter Cluster Coordination Group, Logistics Cluster) and with **NGO and donor coordination committees** (e.g. in Malawi we are the co-chair of the INGO Humanitarian Sub-Committee and through this platform we feed into the Country's Humanitarian Country Team agenda and framework, working closely alongside government and the UN Resident Coordinator's Office on any emergency in the country). We participate actively in **National Task Forces** (e.g. in Ethiopia we are on Emergency Seed Government level cluster and in Malawi we are on the Crop Protection Task Force and Cash Working Group) and we work closely to support **national government** (e.g. Ministries of Agriculture) to deliver emergency response. For example, in Ethiopia we have provided logistics and personnel support to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture for emergency field surveys. We work closely with **other international NGOs, local NGOs and local government**, as well as third parties such

as **universities and research institutions**. We also have partnerships with the **private sector** that we are able to leverage for our emergency response work.

At a global level, we are members of the **CHS Alliance**, Cash Learning Partnership Alliance (CALP), Regional Desert Locust Alliance for East Africa, Irish Emergency Alliance. We are registered with **ECHO** and are a member of the ECHO working group in addition to relevant platforms within UN FAO and WFP.

Our **TruTrade social enterprise** in East Africa has a platform which enables it to directly reach 19,000 farmers with information, and the Jokalante app in Senegal provides similar services and we are able to use this platform to share messages as part of anticipatory action or crisis response (for example, providing information about markets that are still functioning so that farmers know if they keep growing crops, they will find a market). We also have existing partnerships with mobile phone companies and are able to access this infrastructure in a crisis.



## Contacts

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